

# Return to Use Initiative

## 2004 Demonstration Project

### Sharon Steel: Midvale, Utah

**THE SITE:** The 470-acre Sharon Steel Superfund Site in Midvale, Utah consists of two Operable Units (OUs). OU1 is considered to be the source of the contamination, which remains on site; OU2 comprises of residential and commercial properties to which contamination spread by blowing wind. While the properties in OU2 returned to use immediately after cleanup, the capped and vegetated 260 acres of OU1 has remained vacant in Midvale since the cleanup of the former smelting and milling facility.

**THE OPPORTUNITY:** A development group (consisting of the property owners and Midvale officials) is considering a redevelopment plan for a mixed land-use community that would include commercial, office, business park, and residential uses, as well as parks, open spaces, and neighborhood town center.

**THE BARRIER:** Midvale is home to two large Superfund sites, and the city's long history of dealing with these sites in all stages of the remedial process has made it difficult to keep redevelopment process going forward. As at other superfund sites in the area, stigma associated with the Sharon Steel property poses a barrier to its reuse. In the past, EPA had issued "clean letters" stating the cleanup was successful and the site was no longer hazardous. However, these letters were not enough to offset the skepticism and stigma surrounding the site.

**THE SOLUTION:** In July 2004, an Explanation of Significant Differences was written to address the proposed change in use at the site: The scope of operation and maintenance of the site would be broadened and the required responsibilities more defined. Institutional controls would be more extensive and the land reuse broadened to include various mixed uses. On September 24, 2004, EPA deleted the site from the National Priorities List of Superfund Sites. On September 30, 2004, EPA issued a Ready for Reuse (RfR) Determination that says the Sharon Steel site is ready for mixed uses, such as residential and commercial. After EPA issued the document, the Midvale Director of the Department of Community and Economic Development said the RfR Determination was a key element to keeping reuse discussions moving forward. Also in 2004, a Site Modification Plan for redevelopment was approved by EPA, the State, and Midvale City and was subsequently issued by the Sharon Steel development group. In order to maintain the protectiveness of



**Barrier:** Superfund site stigma

**Solution:** A tripartite effort:

- Midvale City: implemented and maintained institutional control program to allow for redevelopment;
- Developers: provided creative redevelopment plans, demonstrated willingness to collaborate with federal, state, and local agencies;
- U.S. EPA: issued RfR Determination



**Before:** Cleaned up smelting and milling facility; 260 vacant acres; capped in 1996, the property loomed over Midvale City like a large, flat-topped hill

**After:** Planned mixed land-use community

the remedy and success of the redevelopment project, EPA, the State, Midvale City, and local stakeholders will continue to work together to see that redevelopment on the site becomes a reality.

**THE MIXED USE COMMUNITY:** The proposed planned community will have a range of land uses, including a 2,500-unit residential development. Because the redevelopment plan for the Sharon Steel site involves construction activities on a capped tailings pile, State operation and maintenance activities and institutional controls developed during the Midvale City zoning and land-use planning processes will need to be followed and enforced to ensure that the remedy remains protective during and after redevelopment. The Institutional Control Process Plan, which was developed to facilitate reuse of the site in compliance with the 2004 Explanation of Significant Differences, will provide guidelines for adhering to institutional controls requirement at the site. In 2005, the developer at the site delivered a draft geotechnical report for the site. Installation of utilities and roads is estimated to begin in 2008. At present, the developer has brought fill to the site to surcharge some of the areas for development and will continue to transport fill to achieve 8 to 22 feet of required fill depth to be able to develop on the capped site.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:** Erna Waterman, Remedial Project Manager, at (303) 312-6762 or [waterman.erna@epa.gov](mailto:waterman.erna@epa.gov); or Fran Costanzi, Region 8 Superfund Redevelopment Coordinator, at [costanzi.fran@epa.gov](mailto:costanzi.fran@epa.gov) or (303) 312-6552.



*Aerial view of Operable Unit 1 of the Sharon Steel site, looking south.*